



NEWS RELEASE

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Couple Charged with Human Trafficking

District Attorney Jackie Lacey announced today that a Sylmar couple has been charged with human trafficking and slavery for allegedly forcing a 9-year-old girl smuggled from El Salvador to work for them for the last two years.

“We will not allow our children to be treated as human commodities,” District Attorney Lacey said in a statement. “Human trafficking must be stopped.”

Dora Alicia Valle (11/23/63) and her boyfriend Estrada Melvin Sandoval (3/28/74) pleaded not guilty this morning to one felony count each of human trafficking and one count each of slavery in case BA423675.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Renee Korn set their bail at \$175,000 each.

Deputy District Attorney Ronald Goudy with the Organized Crime Division said Valle allegedly paid to have the girl smuggled into the United States from El Salvador in 2012.

Valle allegedly forced the girl, now 11 years old, to work four days a week at her Costa Del Sol restaurant in Pacoima. When she wasn't working at Valle's restaurant, she was ordered to clean the Sylmar home shared by Valle and Sandoval.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled for April 29 in Department 32 of the Foltz Criminal Justice Center.

If convicted, they each face more than 12 years in state prison.

The case is being investigated by the Los Angeles Police Department's Robbery-Homicide Division.

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About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](http://da.lacounty.gov) prosecuted more than 73,000 felony defendants and 113,000 misdemeanor defendants.